



AKRON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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August 18, 2010 Update on the Consolidation of Public Health Services

Those involved in the public health system within Summit County routinely seek to improve public health service to all residents of Summit County. One service delivery model that has been proposed and has been studied in depth over the past year is a consolidation of the services of the Akron Health Department and the Summit County General Health District. Representatives of the Akron Health Department, the Summit County General Health District, their respective Boards of Health, the City of Akron and Summit County councils and administrative bodies, and other public health stakeholders had been involved in this study and, in January of 2010, recommended consolidating the public health services offered by the Akron Health Department and those of the Summit County Combined General Health District, what the Ohio Department of Health would call a unified General Health District within Summit County. It was later decided to pursue this as a union between a city health district and a county general health district.

While significant commonalities in structure and service were recognized, there were a number of questions to be answered and issues to be resolved for such an arrangement to be feasible. The consolidation feasibility study group, hosted by Akron Tomorrow and chaired by William Considine of Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron, identified and studied critical issues prior to making a recommendation as to the feasibility of a consolidation. These eight critical issues were: Governance, Personnel, Finance, Public Health Services, Location/Facilities, Legal, Timetable, and Community/Stakeholder Inclusion. In the end, all agreed consolidating the public health services was not only feasible but that doing so presented numerous opportunities to improve services to the residents served by the health districts individually. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on March 10, 2010 by the Mayor of Akron and the Health Commissioner of the Summit County Combined General Health District representing the Summit County Board of Health.

The matter was presented to the Akron City Council for consideration in July, 2010 and they voted unanimously on August 16, 2010 to authorize the Mayor of Akron to enter into a contract for services with the Summit County General Health District. All governing bodies remain committed to assuring the successful transition to the consolidation of public health services via a contract with the Summit County Board of Health by January 1, 2011.

Transition teams have been meeting on a regular basis to align staff and programming needs to assure high quality programming is matched with appropriately supported personnel. Multiple departments of the City of Akron continue to work together to assure the issues regarding the transition of Akron personnel to County Health Department employment are handled appropriately in as satisfactory a manner as is possible to all involved.

Standing Commitments:

- 1.) There will not be a reduction of public health services to those populations currently served by the Akron Health Department.
- 2.) There will remain an accessible Health Department facility in Downtown Akron.
- 3.) All Akron Health Department employees in good standing at the time of transition will be offered positions within the Summit County General Health District.